

Message Text

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PAGE 01 OSAKA 00925 300359Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-20
/077 W

-----013378 300402Z /12

R 280600Z AUG 78
FM AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3680
INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMCONSUL FUKUOKA
AMCONSUL SAPPORO
AMCONSUL NAHA

UNCLAS OSAKA KOBE 0925

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, JA
SUBJECT: PROGRESSIVE GOVERNOR REELECTED IN KAGAWA

SUMMARY:

1. THE REELECTION OF GOVERNOR TADAO MAEKAWA IN KAGAWA PREFECTURE AUGUST 27 INTERRUPTED THE NATIONWIDE SUCCESSION OF CONSERVATIVE VICTORIES IN GUBERNATORIAL ELECTIONS AT 12, AND IS BEING GREETED BY THE JAPAN SOCIALIST PARTY. AND LESS EFFUSIVELY BY THE JAPAN COMMUNIST PARTY, AS A SUCCESSFUL TEST OF NEW PATTERN OF 'PROGRESSIVE' COOPERATION IN THE CURRENT SITUATION WHERE KOMEITO AND DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS ARE REFUSING FORMAL ELECTION ALLIANCES WITH THE JCP. IN PRACTICE IT APPEARS THAT THE PERSONALITIES OF THE OPPOSING CANDIDATES, INCUMBENT ADVANTAGE, AND THE FAILURE OF THE CONSERVATIVES TO FIND AN EFFECTIVE BASIS FOR ATTACKING MAEKAWA'S FIRST-TERM ACCOMPLISHMENTS WERE AT LEAST AS DECISIVE AS POLITICAL PARTY SUPPORT. END SUMMARY.

2. INCUMBENT GOVERNOR TADAO MAEKAWA, FORMALLY SUPPORTED BY JSP AND JCP, AND BACKED BY KOMEITO AND DSP, DEFEATED
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LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY CHILLAENGER YOSHINORI ONO 305,000 TO 263,000 IN THE KAGAWA GURERNATORIAL ELECTION AUGUST 27, THE TURNOUT, AT 82 PERCENT OF ELIGIBLE VOTERS, WAS THE HIGHEST IN THE PREFECTURE'S HISTORY, NATIONAL LEADERS ON BOTH SIDES HAD VISITED KAGAWA IN SUPPORT OF THE RESPECTIVE CANDIDATES, INCLUDING PRIME MINISTER FUKUDA AND LDP SECRETARY GENERAL OHIRA (WHO IS ELECTED FROM KAGAWA) AND OTHER CARINET-

LEVEL BACKERS OF ONO, AND JSP CHAIRMAN ASUKATA, JCP SECRETARY GENERAL FUWA AND KOMEITO VICE-CHAIRMAN NINOMIYA IN SUPPORT OF MAEKAWA. FORMER JSP SECRETARY GENERAL NARITA REPORTEDLY STUCK AT MAEKAWA'S ELBOW THROUGHOUT THE CAMPAIGN, COMPARISON OF VOTE TOTALS WITH RECENT DIET ELECTIONS MAKES IT APPEAR THAT ONO BARELY HELD THE DIEHARD LDP VOTE (ABOUT EQUAL TO 1977 COUNCILLORS TOTAL WHEN VOTER TURNOUT WAS 70 PERCENT) WHILE MAEKAWA DREW 60,000 MORE THAN JSP AND JCP TOTAL IN THAT ELECTION.

3. THE IMPRESSION IS UNAVOIDABLE THAT ONO, DESPITE FAMILY POLITICAL TIES WITH KAGAWA, WAS NOT AN EFFECTIVE CANDIDATE, HE IS A 42-YEAR-OLD FORMER FINANCE MINISTRY OFFICIAL WHOSE SERVICE WAS LARGELY ON THE INTERNATIONAL SIDE. HIS LATE FATHER WAS VICE GOVERNOR OF KAGAWA, AND HIS FATHER-IN-LAW IS LDP KIET MEMBER JOTARO KATO. THE LDP TRIED TO PLAY UP THE ELECTION AS IMPORTANT TO THE PROSPECTS OF OHIRA BECOMING THE FIRST PRIME MINISTER FROM THE PREFECTURE, THIS HELPED DRAW NATIONAL MEDIA ATTENTION TO THE ELECTION BUT DOES NOT APPEAR TO HAVE IMPRESSED THE VOTERS, PERHAPS IN PART BECAUSE KATO, MIKI FACTION MEMBER, HAS IN THE PAST BEEN REGARDED AS ANTI-OHIRA (THEY ARE ELECTED FROM THE SAME DISTRICT).

4. MAEKAWA, ALTHOUGH SUPPORTED BY FOUR 'PROGRESSIVE' PARTIES, DID NOT CONCLUDE A FORMAL POLITICAL AGREEMENT WITH ANY OF THEM, AND RAN AS A NOMINAL INDEPENDENT, PRESS ACCOUNTS UNCLASSIFIED

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INDICATE THAT HE CAREFULLY AVOIDED IDENTIFICATION WITH THE NATIONAL PLATFORMS OF THE OPPOSITION PARTIES DURING HIS CAMPAIGN, AND INSTEAD CONCENTRATED ON HIS WELFARE PROGRAMS FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE PREFECTURE AND KEPT HIS IMAGE THAT OF THE SENIOR NONPARTISAN SCHOLAR (HE IS FORMER PRESIDENT OF KAGAWA UNIVERSITY). THE RESULTS SUGGEST THAT THIS POSTURE, IN CONTRAST TO ONO'S YOUTH WITH OVERTONES OF NEPOTISM, SWEEPED THE FLOATING VOTE AND EVEN CUT INTO THE NORMAL CONSERVATIVE VOTE.

5. EVEN THOUGH THE CAMPAIGN RECORD SUGGESTS THAT MAEKAWA INDIVIDUALLY DID AT LEAST AS MUCH AS HIS PARTY SUPPORT TO ACHIEVE HIS REFLECTION, THE JSP HAS ALREADY HAILED THE 'KAGAWA MODEL' AS A NEW AND PROMISING PATTERN OF ANTI-LDP COOPERATION IN PREFECTURAL ELECTIONS. THE PROSPECTS APPEAR PROMISING FOR SIMILAR 'PROGRESSIVE' SUCCESS IN REELECTING GOVERNOR TAKEMURA IN SHIGA IN NOVEMBER, BUT AGAIN PRIMARILY ON THE BASIS OF THE INCUMBENT'S INDIVIDUAL APPEAL. AT PRESENT IT IS NOT EASY TO SEE THE RELEVANCE OF THE 'KAGAWA MODEL' TO NEXT SPRING'S GUBERNATORIAL ELECTIONS IN TOKYO AND OSAKA, WHERE RIVALRIES AMONG THE 'PROGRESSIVE' PARTIES MAKE IT APPEAR UNLIKELY THAT THEY CAN AGREE ON ONE CANDIDATE, PARTICULARLY

INCUMBENT GOVERNOR KURODA IN OSAKA.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ELECTION RESULTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978OSAKA00925
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780353-0663
Format: TEL
From: OSAKA KOBE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780817/aaaaaoje.tel
Line Count: 118
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: e015f25a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1602678
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PROGRESSIVE GOVERNOR REELECTED IN KAGAWA SUMMARY
TAGS: PINT, JA, (MAEKAWA, TADAO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/e015f25a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014